Muhammad, "A Mercy to Mankind"

Who was Muhammad?
Muhammad (ﷺ) was born around 570CE in Makkah, the central religious and commercial city in Arabia. He was a direct descendant of the Prophet Abraham, through the lineage of Ishmael. He was orphaned at a young age, so he was brought up by his uncle. He worked as a tradesman, married at the age of 25 and lived a modest and relatively uneventful life. He was however well-respected and noted for his honesty and integrity, and as such was given the title "The Trustworthy One". He used to spend long hours meditating in a cave around Makkah. Here, at the age of 40, he started getting revelations from Almighty God, through the Angel Gabriel. He immediately started preaching to his people, to direct their lives and worship purely to God alone, and to forsake all forms of idolatry (i.e. the worship of other than Almighty God alone).

To prevent people from worshipping him like previous prophets had been, he always referred to himself as the Slave and Messenger of God. He and his early followers were persecuted for their beliefs, but many people began to become Muslim. As the persecution became severe he and his followers were forced to flee to another city, Medeenah to the north of Makkah. In Medeenah, the people accepted his message and made him their leader. From this position of strength he was able to spread Islam far and wide. The enemies of Muhammad (ﷺ) sent armies to wipe out the small Muslim community, however, although being significantly outnumbered they were able to overcome or repel the aggressors. Within a few years he was able to conquer Makkah. In victory, Muhammad (ﷺ) was very merciful, and many of his former enemies, including the leaders became Muslim. He stayed in Makkah for 13 years, calling the people to the Oneness of God, Almighty. Then, the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and some of those who accepted Islaam, migrated to Medeenah. There he lived for 10 years and by his death, at the age of 63, Muhammad (ﷺ) had spread Islam to most of the Arabian Peninsula and his followers spread the religion to most of the world.

Muhammad (ﷺ) lived in the full light of history, his followers took great care to preserve his teachings. They are collected together today as the 'Ahadeeth' (recorded statements, actions or tacit approval) and are the source of Islamic Law with the Qur'an. Muhammad (ﷺ) explained, implemented and lived the teachings of the Qu'ran. He was able to establish a state throughout the Muslim lands, based purely on God's law, incorporating all aspects of life. To Muslims, Muhammad (ﷺ) is the supreme example for all people, he was the exemplary Prophet, statesman, military leader, ruler, teacher, neighbour, husband, father and friend. His actions, interactions with people and rulings form the basis of how Muslims live their lives today.

What the Influential people say about Muhammad and Islam

Although Muhammad (ﷺ) was one of the world's greatest personalities, very little is known about him in the West. However, many historians, professors and journalists have studied and written about him.

"Muhammed is the most successful of all Prophets and religious personalities." *Encyclopedia Britannica*

"It has been a great pleasure for me to help clarify statements in the Qur'an about human development. It is clear to me that these statements must have come to Muhammad from God, or 'Allah', because almost all of this knowledge was not discovered until many centuries later. This proves to me that Muhammad must have been a Messenger of Allah." *Professor Keith Moore, one of the world's prominent scientists of anatomy and embryology, at the University of Toronto, Canada*

"My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular level." *Michael H. Hart, p. 33, The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History, New York: Hart Publishing Company, Inc., 1978*

"I wanted to know the best of one who holds today's undisputed sway over the hearts of millions of mankind.... I became more than convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for his pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle. *Mahatma Gandhi in YOUNG INDIA*

"Everything made so much sense. This is the beauty of the Qur'an; it asks you to reflect and reason....When I read the Qur'an further, it talked about prayer, kindness and charity. I was not a Muslim yet, but I felt the only answer for me was the Qur'an and God had sent it to me." *Cat Stevens (Yusuf Islam), former British pop star.*

"Islam is the fastest-growing religion in America, a guide and pillar of stability for many of our people..." *Hillary Clinton, Los Angeles Times, May 31, 1996, p.3*

"Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the United States..." *New York Times, Feb 21, 1989, p.1*

"Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the country." *Newsday, March 7, 1989, p.4*

"Moslems are the world's fastest-growing group..." *USA Today, the population reference bureau, Feb. 17, 1989, p.4A*

Muslim worship All Mighty God, NOT Muhammad (ﷺ)

The testimony "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah" is to believe that Muhammad (ﷺ) was only a man sent to us by Allah (God) to be obeyed and that we do not worship him.

Allah has said: "***Say*** *(O Muhammad)**: "I am only a man like you. It has been inspired to me that your Ilah*** *(God)* ***is One Ilah*** *(God i.e. Allah)**. So whoever hopes for the Meeting with his Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord***." (Al-Kahf – The Cave, 18:110)

Muslims are commanded in the Qu'ran (the final revelation of God) to worship none, but God alone. According to Islamic belief, the Prophet Muhammad was the last Messenger of God. He, like all of God's Prophets and Messengers - such as Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus - was only a human being. Christians came to the mistaken assumption that Muslims worship Muhammad by formulating an incorrect analogy – some of them worship Jesus so they assumed Muslims worship Muhammad. This is one of the reasons that they called Muslims by the incorrect name "Mohammedans" for so many years! Muhammad, like Jesus, never claimed divine status. He called people to worship only Almighty God, and he continually emphasized his humanity so that people would not fall into the same errors as Christians did in regards to Jesus. In order to prevent his deification, the Prophet Muhammad always said to refer to him as "the Messenger of God and His slave". Muhammad was chosen to be God's final Messenger - to communicate the message not only in words but to be a living example of the message. Muslims love and respect him because he was of the highest moral character and he brought the Truth from God - which is the Pure Monotheism of Islam. Even when Islam was in its very early stages, God revealed that Muhammad "was sent as a mercy to all of mankind" - thus informing us that the message of Islam would become very widespread. Muslims strive to follow the great example of Muhammad, peace be upon him, but they **do not** worship him in any way. Additionally, Islam teaches Muslims to respect all of God's Prophets and Messengers - but respecting and loving them does not mean worshipping them. All true Muslims realize that all worship and prayer must be directed to Almighty God alone. Suffice it to say that worshipping Muhammad - or anyone else - along with Almighty God is considered to be the worst sin in Islam. Even if a person claims to be Muslim, but they worship and pray to other than Almighty God, this cancels and nullifies their Islam. The Declaration of Faith of Islam makes it clear that Muslims are taught only to worship God. This declaration is as follows: "There is nothing divine or worthy of being worshipped except for Almighty God and Muhammad is the Messenger and Servant of God".

The Prophet (ﷺ) has said: "***Do not over-praise me as the Christians over-praised the son of Mary. I am His slave, so say: 'Allah's slave and Messenger'***" [Collected in Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim]

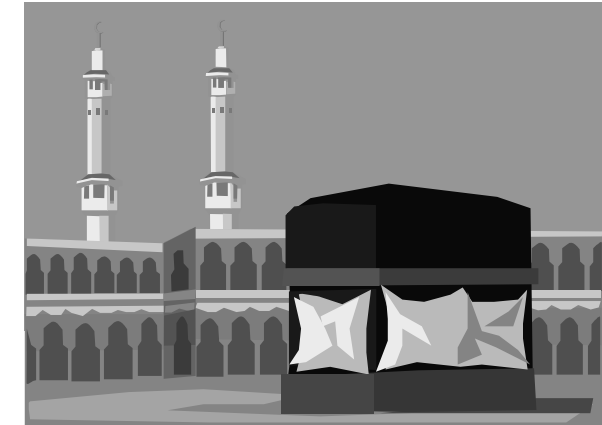
Muhammad in the Qur'an

Muhammad was mentioned in the Qur'an, the main miracle of Islam. At the time the Qu'ran was revealed the Arabs prided themselves on their eloquence, poetry, literary and oratory skills. The Qu'ran however was unique. The eloquence, the rhetoric, the unique structure and internal arrangement, mesmerized the people. Men were moved to tears on hearing its words, people thought it was magic and amazingly some of the greatest opponents of Islam became Muslims. How could Muhammad (ﷺ), known to be illiterate, produce the most outstanding work in terms of literary merit in a language's history?

"And if you are in doubt as to what we have revealed to our servant then produce a chapter like it and call your witnesses or helpers besides God if you are truthful. But if you cannot, and of a surety you cannot, then fear the fire whose fuel is men and stones which is prepared for those who reject faith" (Al-Baqarah – The Cow, 2:22-3)

The following are just a few passages from the Qur'an that speak about Prophet Muhammad:

Allah (God), the Most High states:

"Say (O Muhammad to mankind)**: '*If you*** *(really)* ***love Allaah then follow me*** *(i.e. accept Islamic Monotheism, follow the Qur'an and the Sunnah)**, Allah will love you and forgive you of your sins. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.'"*** (Aali-Imran – The Family of Imraan, 3:31)

"Indeed in the Messenger of Allah** (Muhammad) **you have a good example to follow for him who hopes in** (the Meeting with) **Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah much." (Al-Ahzab – The Confederates, 33:21)

"But know, by your Lord, they can have no Faith, until they make you** (O Muhammad) **judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept** (them) **with full submission." (An-Nisaa' – The Women, 4:65)

"Say** (O Muhammad)**: "I don't tell you that with me are the treasures of Allah, nor** (that) **I know the unseen; nor I tell you that I am an angel. I but follow what is revealed to me by inspiration." Say: "Are the blind and the one who sees equal? Will you not then take thought?" (Al-An'am – The Cattle, 6:50)

Muhammad did NOT Author the Qur'an

In addressing the misconception that Muhammad could have written the Qur'an, it is interesting to note that no other religious scripture claims to the direct word of the Almighty in totality as clear and as often as the Noble Qur'an. As the Qu'ran clearly says: **"If it had been written by man, you would have found many discrepancies therein"**. At the time the Qur'an was revealed, the Arabs recognized that the language of the Qur'an was unique and that it was distinctly different from the language normally used by the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. The Arabs of that time, by the way, were known for their beautiful poetry and Muhammad was known to be an illiterate man! The Qur'an clearly says that Muhammad was unable to read and write, so if this wasn't true, certainly his contemporaries would have protested and rejected him. However, there are no reports of this. Certainly there were people who rejected Muhammad's message, just like other Prophets were rejected, but none for this reason. On the contrary, Muhammad, peace be upon him, had thousands of loyal followers and the results of their efforts spread Islam from Spain to China in just over a century! It is also interesting to note that even though the Qur'an is not poetry, the Arabs more or less gave up writing poetry after it was revealed. It could be said that the Qur'an is the piece of Arabic literature par excellence - and Muhammad's contemporaries realized that the Qur'an was incomparable.

Additionally, it is easy to prove that Muhammad did not possess a great deal of the knowledge which is expounded in the Qur'an: such as knowledge of historical events, previous Prophets and natural phenomenon. The Qur'an says in several places that Muhammad and his people did not know these things - so, again, if this wasn't true, certainly his contemporaries would have rejected his claims. Suffice it to say that not only is the Qur'an the most memorized and well preserved scripture on earth, it is also unequaled in eloquence, spirtual impact, clarity of message and the purity of its truth.

Muhammad in the Bible

In the Qu'ran it states Muhammad (ﷺ) was prophesized in other scriptures. This fact is backed by the fact that many of the early Muslims were learned Christians and Jews, who were expecting a Prophet in Arabia. When we analyze the scripture we find in the Bible, in Deuteronomy 18:18 God tells Moses (عليه السلام) "I will raise up for them (the Jews) a prophet like you from among their brethren." Christians feel this prophesy refers to Jesus (عليه السلام). However, it is clear that this Prophet will be like Moses (عليه السلام) and from the brethren of the Jews. The Jews are descended from Isaac (عليه السلام), and the Arabs from Ishmael (عليه السلام). Ishmael (عليه السلام) and Isaac (عليه السلام) were brothers, the sons of Abraham (عليه السلام). Thus the brethren of the Jews are the Arabs (Descendants of Ishmael). Moses (عليه السلام) and Muhammad (ﷺ) were far more similar to one another than Jesus (عليه السلام). Both had natural births, married, had children, were initially rejected by their people, finally accepted and led their people (both religiously and secularly), had to flee their homeland, overcame their enemies, brought forth new laws (established God's law) and had natural deaths.

It is important to note that the Jews were waiting for this prophet at the time of Jesus (عليه السلام), they felt this prophet, the one like Moses (عليه السلام) was different from the Christ. In John 1:19-25, they asked John the Baptist whether he was Elijah, or the Christ, or "the Prophet". Thus showing that they were waiting for two great Prophets, the Christ and "the Prophet". Muslims believe Jesus (عليه السلام) was the Christ and Muhammad (عليه السلام) was "The Prophet".

The Prophetic Narrations of Muhammad

All of Prophet Muhammad's narrations are collected in volumes of books and are again referred to as 'hadeeth'. His words are separated from the Qur'an, which only has the words of All Mighty God. Some examples of these narrations are as follows:

The Prophet (ﷺ) has said:

"All my people will enter Al-Jannah (The Garden) except those who refused. (On being asked about those who refused, he replied) He who obeys me will enter Al-Jannah, he who disobeys me has refused." [Collected in Al-Bukhaaree]

"None of you believes until I am dearer to him than his father, his child, and all of mankind" [Collected in Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim]

"Islam is based on (the following) five (principles): 1. To testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and muhammad is Allah's Apostle. 2. To offer the (compulsory congregational) prayers dutifully and perfectly. 3. To pay Zakat (i.e. obligatory charity). 4. To perform Hajj. (Pilgrimage to Makkah) 5. To observe fast during the month of Ramadan. [Collected in Al-Bukhaaree]

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There is no doubt that Muhammad (ﷺ) was one of history's great individuals, whatever you believe in, wherever you are from, we ask you to find out more about this incredible man.

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Muhammad

A Witness, Bearer of Glad Tidings and a Warner

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